

chair of the West Virginia University Alumni Association's national board of directors. As chair, she has proven successful in encouraging her fellow alumni to follow her lead and expand their businesses in the Mountain State.

I thank Malene and her team for all they do to make life more meaningful for people when they are most vulnerable. As National Hospice and Palliative Care Month comes to a close, I would like to honor all of the physicians, nurses, caregivers, and volunteers who provide this valuable patient service under the Medicare Hospice Benefit. As someone who has cared for aging parents, I understand how important the work they do is and how much support and comfort it provides to patients and their families.

#### RECOGNIZING JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize James Whitcomb Riley Elementary School of New Castle, IN, for being named a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among students.

Recognized as an "A" school 11 of the past 12 years, James Whitcomb Riley Elementary has shown its outstanding commitment to high-quality education. Through its core curriculum and extracurricular activities, faculty at Riley work to ensure that each child is receiving the best possible educational experience. As part of that effort, the school's staff communicates regularly with families and partners with community organizations to ensure that students are receiving the resources that they need. In addition, extracurricular opportunities are offered throughout the year and include Spell Bowl and Math Bowl competitions, a science fair, student council, and the National Geographic Bee. Riley students also regularly go out in the community for field trips to learn outside the classroom. Sixth-grade students take an annual trip to Washington, DC, to learn about the Federal Government in our Nation's Capital.

Riley Elementary also puts an emphasis on service and giving back through fundraisers and food drives, instilling in students the importance of a community-focused mindset. Riley students participate in the annual Westminster Food Drive each winter to donate gifts to children at local shelters and abroad. The school also partners with Riley Children's Hospital through "Spirit Week" to connect students with young patients being treated at the hospital.

Riley's students, faculty, and staff work together to ensure every child succeeds, and the faculty partners with parents to encourage family engagement and parent involvement in school-sponsored activities, including a strong parent teacher organization.

I am proud to recognize James Whitcomb Riley Elementary School's principal Nicholas John Middleton, the entire staff, the student body, and their families. The effort, dedication, and value you put into education has led not only to this prestigious recognition, but will benefit you and the New Castle community well into the future.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate James Whitcomb Riley Elementary School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

#### RECOGNIZING PLEASANT VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Pleasant View Elementary School of Zionsville, IN, for being named a 2017 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

Established in 1982, the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes schools that have demonstrated a vision of educational excellence for all students, regardless of their social or economic background. Since its inception, this program has offered the opportunity for schools in every State to gain recognition for educational accomplishments in closing the achievement gaps among students.

Zionsville's Pleasant View Elementary School serves over 800 students from preschool through fourth grade. In addition to the core curriculum, the school provides many different learning opportunities for students before and after school, including language enrichment, music, and robotics programs. Pleasant View Elementary seeks to tailor instruction to meet students' individual learning styles and provide hands-on learning experiences. Pleasant View prides itself on creating a nurturing and collaborative learning environment where teachers, students, and parents work together so that all students can reach their potential. Teachers are encouraged to come up with new ideas to foster student growth through research-based practices to empower students and help them develop useful life skills. At Pleasant View, teachers understand that education is not one size fits all and that each student has their own unique way to learn.

Pleasant View Elementary maintains a high standard for academic excellence, driven by the success of a rigorous curriculum, innovative instructional practices, and a highly qualified and dedicated staff. Faculty works closely with parents to ensure their children are receiving a quality education. The parent teacher organiza-

tion also creates community and campus events to further enrich students academically and socially. Pleasant View Elementary School's dedication to student achievement and positive atmosphere have been key to its success. The school's staff and families work together to teach and foster values that develop strong character and better the community.

I am proud to recognize Pleasant View Elementary School principal Stacy Smith, the entire staff, the student body, and their families. The effort, dedication, and value you put into education has led not only to this prestigious recognition, but will benefit you and the Zionsville community well into the future.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I congratulate Pleasant View Elementary School, and I wish the students and staff continued success in the future.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MONTANA WHEAT AND BARLEY COMMITTEE

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I would like to recognize and congratulate the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee on their 50th anniversary. Agriculture is Montana's No. 1 economic driver, and wheat and barley are the principal grain crops produced in Montana. Established in 1967, the committee works to promote Montana wheat and barley producers, help identify and open markets both at home and abroad, and advance research that helps with crop quality and production. The severe drought and low commodity prices that Montana farmers have faced over the course of the past year have highlighted the importance of these efforts, and I thank all the directors, members, and staff for their years of dedication. •

#### REMEMBERING FATHER SOLANUS CASEY

• Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize cofounder of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen and member of the Capuchin Franciscan Order of Saint Joseph, Father Solanus Casey. Father Casey is the third American-born to be honored with the distinction of Blessed from the Roman Catholic Church, the final step before sainthood.

Born as Bernard Francis Casey on November 25, 1870, Father Casey was raised on a farm in Oak Grove, WI, along the banks of the Mississippi River, with his parents and 15 siblings. At an early age, Father Casey learned diligence, obedience, and piety from his parents, who honored their Irish Catholic faith above all else. At the age of 12, Father Casey attended Saint Patrick Church in Hudson, WI, and felt the call to the priesthood during the lessons for his first Holy Communion.

After working as a logger, prison guard, and streetcar operator, Father

Casey decided to pursue a lifetime of service and entered Saint Francis Seminary in Milwaukee, WI. The next 8 years were a difficult journey toward priesthood for Father Casey as he struggled academically. The seminary officials believed that Father Casey did not have the proper skills to be a priest and suggested he join a religious order: Franciscans, Dominicans, or Jesuits. After praying before a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Father Casey heard the Blessed Mother tell him to "Go to Detroit," home to the Capuchins. In 1897, Father Casey was invested as Capuchin Novice Francis Solanus, named after Saint Francis Solanus of the 17th century. The name seemed fitting as both Father Casey and Saint Francis Solanus loved to play the violin.

After being ordained as a simplex priest in 1904, Father Casey began his ministry in the State of New York, serving three different parishes: Sacred Heart Parish, Our Lady of Sorrow Parish, and Our Lady of Angels Parish. While in New York, Father Casey held numerous positions within the church, including porter. He embraced the task of doorkeeper, welcoming and praying with all visitors and offering simple and candid comfort. Father Casey held weekly services for the sick and quickly became known for his compassion towards all who suffered. He embodied the ultimate spirit of public service by giving 100 percent of himself to the poor, the hungry, and the unloved.

In 1924, Father Casey was appointed to the Saint Bonaventure Monastery in the city of Detroit as a porter, providing soup for the hungry, kind words for the troubled, and a healing touch for the ill. For over 20 years, he brought comfort and hope to people of all religions, earning the recognition as "The Doorkeeper." During the Great Depression, Father Casey helped establish the Capuchin Soup Kitchen in the city of Detroit, which prepared large sandwiches and warm cups of coffee for the hungry and unemployed. Today the Capuchin Soup Kitchen is recognized as one of the most well-known food pantries in the region, serving over 60,000 meals and distributing roughly 250,000 pounds of food a month. During World War II, Father Casey also provided advice and prayers for many families throughout southeast Michigan whose sons and daughters were honorably serving our Nation. Although Father Casey was ordained as a simplex priest, people across the State of Michigan waited in lines in order to speak with him and receive his blessings. Father Casey never fully retired, but rather spent the last decade of his life serving the sick and troubled at Saint Felix Friary in Huntington, IN, until his death in 1957.

In 1995, Father Casey received the title of Venerable from the Roman Catholic Church in recognition of his virtuous life. Father Casey exemplified the theological virtues of the Roman Catholic Church: charity, faith, and

hope. On May 4, 2017, Pope Francis announced that Father Casey would be elevated to the status of Blessed, recognizing his widespread reputation of holiness and intercessory prayer. According to the Roman Catholic Church, a Panamanian woman on a pilgrimage was healed from a genetic skin condition almost instantly, with no scientific explanation, after visiting the tomb of Father Solanus Casey at Saint Bonaventure Monastery in the city of Detroit in 2012. In order to receive the title of Blessed, the Roman Catholic Church investigates reports of exceptional favors received, acclaimed as miraculous or unexplainable. The beatification of Father Casey is the greatest testament to his commitment to those in need and a significant step toward sainthood.

I cannot express enough the impact Father Solanus Casey had on communities across the State of Michigan. The road to sainthood is paved with love and service for Father Casey. He was a beloved Capuchin friar in the city of Detroit credited with miraculous cures and valued for his compassionate counsel. Throughout his life of tireless service, he encouraged countless individuals in the metropolitan Detroit region to address issues of poverty and hunger. I am confident his legacy will continue to inspire others to open the door and be a porter to anyone who knocks.●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations and a withdrawal which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 4:04 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 3109. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1114 North 2nd Street in Chillicothe, Illinois, as the "Sr. Chief Ryan Owens Post Office Building".

The message also announced that pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 2081, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Member on the part of the House of Representatives to the United States Capitol Preservation Committee: Mrs. COMSTOCK of Virginia.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 5 of the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission Act (Public Law 115-77), the Minority Leader appoints the following Delegate of the House of Representatives to the Frederick Douglass Bicentennial Commission: Ms. NORTON of the District of Columbia; And from private life: Mr. Kenneth B. Morris, Jr. of Orange, California.

At 4:49 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1. An act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018.

#### MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 3109. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1114 North 2nd Street in Chillicothe, Illinois, as the "Sr. Chief Ryan Owens Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

#### MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 1. To provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

H.R. 3210. A bill to require the Director of the National Background Investigations Bureau to submit a report on the backlog of personnel security clearance investigations, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-185).

By Mr. THUNE, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1425. A bill to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-186).

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 2161. A bill to prevent gun trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 109

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Wyoming